



Office of the Regional Chair | Jim Bradley

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Memorandum

CHR 04-2021

TO: Regional Council

FROM: Daryl Barnhart, Executive Officer to the Regional Chair

DATE: August 26, 2021

SUBJECT: Regional Chair's Youth Advisory Panel

On May 11, 2021, the City of Niagara Falls passed a motion supporting representatives from the Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee to appear before Regional Council to seek the creation of a Regional Youth Advisory Committee.

Once in receipt of the City's motion, staff from the Regional Chair's office proactively met with proponents from the Niagara Falls Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee. As the Regional Chair is fully supportive of this initiative, the meeting was held to gain a better understanding of the proposal, and to find ways for the Chair to best support the creation of such a committee. This memo also serves as endorsement of the recommendations being brought forward by the representative delegates from the Niagara Falls Youth Advisory Committee, namely Salony Sharma and Arul Dilwaria.

Upon the completion of these initial meetings, staff identified that a Regional Chair's youth advisory panel would be able to provide unique and valuable insights on numerous Regional policies and initiatives. In these discussions, it was determined that the panel will have valuable perspectives on numerous topics including public transit, waste management, climate change, diversity, equity and inclusion and mental health issues. The Chair also supports this initiative as a way to capitalize on the successes of the youth advisory groups that exist in the local municipalities, while also supporting both the sharing of information and coordination of youth-based initiatives at the local level.

This panel will have a distinct mandate and will not replicate the efforts of other Region youth-centric groups such as REACT.

Given the desired outcomes of this panel (as articulated by the Niagara Falls Youth Committee representatives), the timelines associated with the recruitment of membership for the panel, and the resources associated with providing administrative support for advisory committees, the following parameters were proposed by staff in the Chair's office:

1. The panel will be formed as a special initiative of the Regional Chair rather than a formal advisory committee of Regional Council. This structure will allow for the expedited establishment of the panel, with the first meeting being expected in October, versus an anticipated start date of January.
2. The panel will have one representative from each of the 12 local area municipalities that will be selected through a formal recruitment process. The membership term will be 12 months, with an optional extension for an additional year.
3. Membership will include one Regional Councillor who will volunteer to sit on the panel to provide guidance and mentorship, as well as act as the panel's advocate when required.
4. Youth members will be selected through the completion of a scoring matrix that will be marked by the panel's Regional Council volunteer representative along with staff from the Regional Chair's office.
5. Staff from the Regional Chair's office will sit on the panel in an ex-officio status to provide advice and guidance when required.
6. The panel will meet a maximum of six times per year; however, should a time-sensitive matter arise, the panel may meet at the call of the Chair. Minutes will be circulated on the Council Weekly Correspondence Distribution and the panel's terms of reference, will be shared with Regional Council through the Corporate Services Committee.
7. The Regional Chair's Youth Advisory Panel will differ from some other Mayor's Youth Advisory Committees across the Region as it will not have an operational budget, nor will it develop and/or execute on its own initiatives. Any recommendations will be provided to Regional Council through a memorandum or report from the Regional Chair's Office.
8. The chair of the Youth Advisory Panel will provide a minimum of one verbal update per year directly to Regional Council.

Staff anticipate starting the recruitment process in early September, with the first meeting being conducted by the end of October. The final membership list will be shared with Regional Council at the October 21 Regional Council meeting. Councillors wishing to volunteer to participate on the panel are asked to reach out directly to the Regional Chair's office.

Sincerely,

Daryl Barnhart, MA, APR
Niagara Region